THE PRACTICE OF Godlineſs: OR BRIEF RULES

Directing Chriſtians how to keep their hearts in a conſtant holy frame, and how to order their converſation aright.

With an Addition concerning *Self Examination*, and the *Nature* of *Faith*.

The Third Edition Reviſed and Corrected.

By *HENRY LUKIN* Miniſter of the Goſpel.

Pro. 4. 23. *Keep thine heart with all diligence.*
Pſal. 50. 23. *To him that ordereth his converſation aright, will I ſhew the ſalvation of God.*

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TO

The Right Worſhipful

Mrs *Elizabeth Maſham.*

BEing now upon a review of this ſmall Treatiſe, to ſend it a ſecond time to the Preſs, I thought it a fit ſeaſon to dedicate it to you, both particularly to commend to you the practice of the Rules therein contained, and likewiſe that I might here take occaſion to give you ſome Directions for the right improvement of that affliction under which it hath pleaſed the Lord of late to exerciſe you. And although it may be ſaid, that this might have been done rather *in the ear, than thus on the houſe top*; yet I have choſen rather to do it thus publickly, both for your ſake, that you might reckon your ſelf the more oblig'd to obſerve them, while the

world is witneſs that you wanted not advice and admonition; and likewiſe for the ſake of others, that (if theſe Directions be of any uſe) others may have the benefit of them. I was much induced hereto by the complaint which I heard you make, when God had brought you back from the gates of death, and *Patience had had its perfect work*, in bearing that heavy burden which you lay under, *viz. that your greateſt work was yet behind:* reckoning it an harder matter to improve an affliction then to undergo it. And indeed ſo it is, as appears plainly by the inſtance of *Hezekiah*, who was a good man, and did much good in the beginning of his reign, as we may read 2 *Chron.* 29. and he had the comfort of it when he came to lye on his ſick-bed, *Iſa.* 38. 3. And how did he plead for the continuance of his life? *Verſ.* 19. Doubtleſs upon a good intention, and hope of living (as he had before done) to the glory of God, and doing good in his generation: But *he turned aſide as a broken bow* Pſal. 78. 58. He miſſed the mark which (without queſtion) he ſincerely aimed at. We read of his pomp and worldly greatneſs (through the abuſe of which he entail'd a curſe upon his people whom he left behind him) but little of his goodneſs only that he repented and humbled himſel

ſelf, and ſo ſaved his own ſoul, 2 *Chron.* 32. 25, &c.

Now theſe things are written for our inſtruction, that we might not fall by the ſame example of ingratitude. It is an obſervation of a Learned man (the Lord *Verulam*) that *Proſperity* belongs to the Bleſſings of the Old Teſtament, *Adverſity* to the Bleſſings of the New. Something indeed there is in his obſervation, but I am ſure, correction accompanied with inſtruction, was then a Bleſſing, *Pſal.* 94. 12. And without this it is not yet a Bleſſing, *Heb.* 12. 11.

Now that we may know what uſe to make of affliction, or what leſſon we are to learn thereby, we muſt underſtand that God ſometimes ſends affliction on ſome ſpecial errand, with reſpect to ſome particular ſin. And this is evident, either when God dealeth with men by retaliation, as in the caſe of *Adonibezek*, Judg. 1. 7. or by puniſhing men in ſuch things as have been the inſtruments of their ſin, as he made *Jeroboam*'s arm wither which he ſtretched forth againſt the Prophet, 1 *King.* 13. 4. and many Inſtances there are of this kind. Sometimes God makes that which is the *natural* effect of mens ſin, to be the *moral* effect, or puniſhment of it. Thus he puniſheth luxury with diſeaſes in the body, *Job* 20. 11. Idleneſs with poverty, *Prov.* 23. 21, &c. and

fills men with the fruit of their own doings. Sometimes God bringeth ſome ſpecial ſin to remembrance, and awakens conſcience to ſmite them for it, as in the caſe of *Joſeph's* Brethren *Gen.* 42 21. Sometimes God ſaith (in effect) to us, as Chriſt to *Peter*, *What I do, thou knoweſt not now, but thou ſhalt know*, Joh. 13. 7. At preſent we may not know the particular meaning of an affliction, but may underſtand it better afterwards. But (as the *Schoolmen* obſerve) to ſpeak ſtrictly and properly, God hath no end without himſelf. But when we ſay, this or that is God's end in ſuch a paſſage of his providence which he exerciſeth us with, or in ſuch a gift which he beſtows on us, the meaning is, that it doth of it ſelf conduce to ſuch an end, or is to be improved by us thereunto. Wherefore till it be more evident, what is the ſpecial uſe of any affliction, we muſt conſider what improvement in general may be made of it. And there are five things which I ſhall propound to your conſideration for this end.

Firſt, Conſider what was your greateſt comfort, and ſtood you in greateſt ſtead in the time of diſtreſs, that ſo you may know what to put the greateſt price and value upon, and how to prepare for what trials may befall you in time to come: for the remedies which you have found effectual at one time,

time, will be uſeful to you at another; and we keep the receipts of thoſe things by us which we have found to be good by experience. Was it any worldly enjoyment? Theſe I am ſure you complained of as *miſerable Comforters*. Can you not rather ſay with *David*, Pſal. 94. 19. *In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts, O Lord, have refreſhed my ſoul!* Oh let not *the conſolations of God, be ſmall with you!* Job 15. 11. Labour for more clear evidence of his loving kindneſs; prize it more than life. And though you ſhould want many other comforts, bleſs him for this as long as you live, *Pſal.* 63. 3, 4. Was not the Word of God your chief ſtay and ſupport? Say with *David*, Pſal. 119. 93. *I will never forget thy Precepts, for with them thou haſt quickned me.* See verſ. 49, 50, 54, 97. Was not the teſtimony of your conſcience concerning your ſincerity, your great comfort and rejoycing? 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. *Exerciſe your ſelf continually to have a conſcience void of offence in the ſight of God and man*, Act. 24. 16.

Secondly, Conſider what was your greateſt trouble in your affliction, that ſo you may take heed of providing ſorrow for your ſelf againſt the time to come. Was it a ſenſe of the neglect of your duty in any thing, or of any thing wherein you have exceeded? *Job* 36. 9. (For who is it that

can ſay they have herein made their hearts clean? Say unto God (through his Grace) *You will do ſo no more*, Job 34. 32. Was it the leaving of any worldly comforts? Be looſing your affections from theſe things every day by the ſtudy of mortification, and take heed of letting your heart cleave to theſe things, for then you will have the greater trouble at parting. Was it the thought of leaving any that are dear to you, in doubt of their ſtate and condition? labour the more earneſtly (by your Prayers, Counſels, Example) *to have Jeſus Chriſt formed in them*, Gal. 4. 19. and learn to *caſt all your care upon the Lord*, 1 Pet. 5. 7. that ſo you may with more comfort and ſatisfaction leave them hereafter.

Thirdly, Conſider what ſpecial experiences you had of the goodneſs of God in your affliction. Had you not received the ſentence of death in your ſelf? 2 *Cor.* 1. 9. and yet God was intreated for you; reſolve with *David*, *Pſalm* 116. 1, 2. that you *will love the Lord* for it, and that Prayer ſhall be your conſtant refuge ſo long as you live. Did you not find that really verified, *Deut.* 32. 37. that when your ſtrength was gone, the Lord repented himſelf concerning you, and was the ſtrength of your heart? *Pſal.* 73. 26. Never diſtruſt his power

power or gracious care and providence whatſoever ſtraits you may be brought into. Did you not find his Grace ſufficient for you? 2 *Cor.* 12. 9. How oft have I heard you ſay formerly, That it is an eaſie matter to believe when our Faith is not put to it; or to caſt our ſelves upon Jeſus Chriſt for Salvation in the time of Health and Proſperity? but the tryal of Faith would be when we come into ſtraits, or draw nigh to the *King of terrours*. Were you not in your own apprehenſion even ſtepping into the grave? Yet then (through grace) you were able, with as much quietneſs and confidence as ever, to venture your ſoul upon a Promiſe, and to ſtay your ſelf upon Jeſus Chriſt. This is one precious fruit of affliction. *Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope*, Rom. 5. 3. The trial of Faith is much more precious than *gold*, 1 Pet. 1. 7. In the Greek it is τιμιώτερον, agreeing with δοκίμιον, not with πίστεως. Or if (as *Glaſſius* thinks) the words are to be rendred *probata fides*, the former Subſtantive being put for an Adjective, yet the ſenſe is the ſame, *viz.* that it is a *tried* Faith, that is more precious than gold.

Fourthly, Conſider the ſmart and heavineſs of affliction, and learn hence what ſin is, that brings forth ſuch bitter fruits. Re-

member the wearifom nights and days which you ſpent, and conſider how hell will be endured; if affliction on the body for a few days be ſo grievous to be born; and learn to pity thoſe that are in the like condition. You know the heart of thoſe that are in affliction, *Exod.* 23. 9.

Fifthly, Conſider your own promiſes and reſolutions which you made in your affliction. When *Sigiſmund* the Emperor asked the Biſhop of *Colen*, *What he ſhould do to be happy*; he bid him *live as he promiſed to do the laſt time he had the gout or ſtone.* *Jacob* promiſed what great things he would do, if God would be with him in his journey, *Gen.* 28. 21, 22. but God muſt put *Jacob* in mind of his promiſe, when he had anſwered his Prayer, *Gen.* 35. 2. We ſhould learn of *David* to *pay our vows to the Lord*, which we make in the time of our *diſtreſs*, Pſal. 66. 13. 14.

Now for your help in this work, firſt write down theſe things which I have here propoſed to your conſideration. We have the writing of *Hezekiah* when he was ſick and recovered again, *Iſa.* 38. 9. And ſo we find many other godly men in Scripture, leaving ſuch things on Record: What they ſaid in their affliction, what they ſuffered, how they prayed, how God anſwered them.

Secondly,

Secondly, Be oft reading over these things to revive the remembrance of them, that you may keep your heart duly affected with them. *David* hath some Psalms to bring to remembrance, *Psal.* 38. and *Psal.* 70. that is, to preserve the remembrance of such things as I have here set down.

Thirdly, Pray with *David*, 1 *Chron.* 29.18. that God would keep these things in the imagination of the thought of your heart always, and incline your heart to him.

And for the fastening of these things, consider,

1. It is a provoking sin, and a sign of an evil frame of heart, not to be bettered by affliction, *Isa.* 1. 4, 5. *Jer.* 2. 30.

2. We lose our sufferings, and are most miserable (as *Austin* saith) if we be never the better for them. It's sad indeed to suffer so much in vain, and to have no advantage thereby, *Gal.* 3. 3. It would trouble us to take a great deal of unpleasing Physick, and pay dear for it, and get no good by it.

3. Where God intends good to any, if lesser afflictions will not serve turn, he will lay on greater; as we may read at large, *Lev.* 26. and if he give over any, while they are incorrigible, it is in judgment, and severe displeasure, *Isa.* 1. 5. *Hos.* 4, 17.

Now

Now my hearts deſire, and earneſt Prayer to God for you, is, That he would long continue you to be a bleſſing in the place wherein he hath ſet you, that your Family may be as it hath long been, a ſeminary to the Church of God, that Religion may ſtill thrive under the ſhadow of it, and that the ſame Faith may dwell in your Children, which hath dwelt in their Parents; and Parents Parents; that they may ſtand up in their Generations, to fill up their places, and to be followers of them in their integrity and uſefulneſs: For this would be the joy and crown of rejoycing of

Your Servant, for
May 30. 1659. *Chriſts ſake*, H. L.

THE

THE INTRODUCTION,

Perſwading to the practice of the following *Directions*, and anſwering ſuch Objections as are ordinarily made againſt ſuch a Practice.

IF thou art one that feareſt God, and wouldeſt gladly walk ſo as to pleaſe him, if thou deſireſt to exerciſe thy ſelf unto godlineſs, to follow after righteouſneſs, godlineſs, faith, love, patience, meekneſs, to fight the good fight of faith, to lay hold on eternal life; to get well through an evil world, and to keep thy ſelf unſpotted of it; this little Book was intended for thine uſe: and I hope thou wilt, if thou ſhalt

ſhalt read it, find it fitted thereto. I confeſs upon a review of what I had done, in drawing up theſe Directions, I begun to fear that I might injure the Reader by my ſtudied brevity: I thought ſome might overlook many things which are of ſpecial uſe in a Chriſtian's practice, becauſe I have not inſiſted on them, but heaped them together in ſhort Laconiſmes; and that others (which are more weak) might not ſo eaſily underſtand many things for want of a larger explication or inſtances for the illuſtration of them. For I confeſs I was the more incurious in the compoſing hereof, becauſe I had therein a chief reſpect to thoſe that have attended my Miniſtery, (wherein I have at ſeveral times more fully explained the things contained therein) who will be able by theſe ſhort Memorials, (I hope) to call to mind what they have formerly heard, and *after my departure, to have them in remembrance.*

But

But I was a little eased of my fears, when I considered that these things were of daily use to Christians, and therefore they would be put upon a frequent perusal of them, whereby they may more easily both remark and understand those things, which in one cursory reading might escape their observation: yea I have enlarged somewhat where I thought most needful (which hath occasioned that disproportion of parts which thou mayest observe in the Book;) for it is plainness and usefulness, not neatness or symmetry, which I have aimed at. And now Reader what arguments shall I use to encourage or perswade thee to follow these directions, when thou hast read them? If there be any regard to be had to the glory of God, to the good of others, to the peace and happiness of thine own soul, think on these things.

First, This is the way to glorifie God in your conversations, when you walk

walk blameless, and harmless as his Children, without rebuke, shining as lights in the world, *Phil.* 2. 15. *Mat.* 5. 16. *Joh.* 15. 8. and the Name of God is dishonour'd by the loose, careless walking of Christians, *Rom.* 2. 23, 24.

Secondly. This will be a means to recover the lost credit of Christianity. Christians are not so singular as they should be, *Mat.* 5. 47. they are too much *fashioned to this world*, *Rom.* 12. 2. hereby prophane ones are hardened against the ways of God; others confirmed in their prejudice against the principles of our profession, [the imputation of Christ's Righteousness to our justification, the necessity of his grace to our sanctification, the certain perseverance of believers, *&c.*] and all the arguments which we can use to vindicate them from the imputation of cherishing licentiousness, will never convince gainsayers, unless we enforce them

them by the real proofs of an holy converſation. *See then that you walk circumſpectly*, Epheſ. 5. 15. *that you may by well-doing put to ſilence the ignorance of fooliſh men*, 1 Pet. 2. 15. *That you may cut off occaſion from thoſe that deſire occaſion, that wherein they glory, they may be found even as you*, 2 Cor. 11. 12.

3. This will be a means to gain thoſe that are without, 1 *Pet.* 3. 1. and to provoke to emulation, thoſe that are within, 2 *Cor.* 9. 2.

4. This will be a good means to make your calling and election ſure, 2 *Pet.* 1. 10. compared with *ver.* 5. In the 10th verſe the Apoſtle doth re-inforce his exhortation (which he had laid down in the 5th verſe) by a new argument; as if he had ſaid, the rather give diligence to add to faith virtue, *&c.* to the end you may make your calling and election ſure.

5. This will be the way to have comfort both in life and death, the teſti-

testimony of a good conscience will be a comfort to us in every condition, 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. especially when we come to lye down in the dust of death, 2 *Tim.* 4. 7. Some will object (it may be) that this is more than needs, and why should we impose any unnecessary burden, upon Christians? To this I must say, that it is an unsavoury objection, and not becoming a godly man. To enquire only what is necessary, and what we must do, if we will get to Heaven, argues more self-love, than love to God; more care of our own welfare, than of the glory of God, or how we may do those things which may please him.

2. If all the rules which I have given, be not necessary by vertue of any special *command*, (as I am sure most of them are,) yet they are necessary as *means* to order our conversation aright But if thine objection be intended chiefly against this particula

ticular model which I have drawn up, after so many Treatises on the same subject; I confess then I shall not have so much to say against it; I freely acknowledge that many worthy men have laboured herein, more fit in many respects for such an undertaking than my self: and I must leave every one to their liberty, to use such helps as seem best to them; only this I shall say, that I think I have not *only done that which was done before.* Some have indeed written excellently at large of these things, but some Christians cannot so easily read larger Treatises, nor so easily gather up the sum of them to carry in their minds; these short rules may be useful to such; and those that have leisure and opportunity, may make use of them for the clearer explication of these. Some have written excellent brief Manuals, but have insisted much upon such things as I have here purposely omitted, that

that I might not *actum agere*, as vows, meditations, and the use thereof in quickening affections, and strengthening resolutions: if *thou savourest the things that be of God*, I dare commend to thee what hath been written on this subject, by my worthy Friend Mr. *Tho. White*. Others have written indeed excellent things on this Subject; but there is in their Books such a mixture of Popish Principles and superstition, that weaker Christians which have not their *senses exercised to discern good and evil*, can scarce without danger make use of them. In what I have here written I know nothing that is called in question, (especially in the Directions,) by any sober man: for I have kept within the safe bounds of acknowledged truths, to free the Reader from all suspition (at least from all danger) of being misled into any unsafe paths. If any shall object against

againſt the ſtrictneſs of this exerciſe, or courſe of life, I need ſay no more to ſhame ſuch an objection, but to ſet before you ſome brief inſtances of the Heathen Piety, ſhewing how far they went by the light of nature in the obſervation of theſe rules which I have laid down; their high eſteem of godlineſs in general, above all other things, they very oft diſcover in their writings; but we have frequent inſtances of their practice thereof, in particular duties, as Prayer. It is ſaid of *Socrates*, that his life was nothing but a continual Prayer, ſo frequent was he therein; one paſſage whereof is reported to be, *Date ut ſim pulcher intus, & honeſtus*, which is in effect the ſame with that of *David*, Pſal. 51. 10. *Create in me a clean heart, and renew in me a right ſpirit.* *Seneca* is an eminent example of Ethnick devotion, (I know how he is accuſed by ſome, of contradicting his Principles by his

his practices; yet it appears what their convictions were, however their corrupt affections might prevail against them,) how we should improve the consideration of God's omnipresence; See *Senec. Epist.* 10. how we should improve the consideration of his providence, *Epist.* 107 how we should exercise virtue in every condition, *Epist.* 85. how we should apply our selves to God in Prayer, *Epist.* 41. how we should behave our selves in Prayer, *Epist.* 10. what respect we should have to death and the judgment to come, *Epist.* 4, 12, 26. how careful we should be in the spending of our time, *lib. de brevitate vitæ*, in which book he inveighs much against mens profuse expence of their time, of which alone we may be innocently covetous. Of the choice of our company, *Epist.* 7. and our carriage therein, *Epist.* 10. *Sic vive cum hominibus tanquam Deus videat; sic loquere cum Deo tanquam homines audiant;*

audiant; we should so converse with men as if God looked on, so speak to God in Prayer, as if men heard us. And of taking an account of our selves every night, how we have spent the day past, we have an admirable example *lib.3. de Ira, cap.36.* and this last was an ordinary practice with devouter heathens; concerning which, there are famous precepts of *Pythagoras* in his Golden verses, μήδ' ὕπνῳ μαλακῷσι, κλ.

i. e. *Nec prius in dulcem declines lumina somnum,*
Omnia quam longi reputaveris acta diei,
Quo prætergressus, quid factum in tempore, quid non,
Sic dicta & facta per omnia ingrediens,
Ortuq; & vespere cuncta revolvens,
Offensus pravis, da palmam & præmia rectis.

The sum of which is, that we should

ſhould give no ſleep to our eyes, n
ſlumber to our eye-lids, till we ha
examined and paſſed ſentence upo
all the actions of the day, approvi
the good, and condemning the evil
Vid. Arriani Epictet. *lib.* 3. *cap.* 1
Auſon. *Edyll.* 8. Much more to li
purpoſe we might be furniſhed wit
out of *Plutarch*, *Epictetus*, *De*
Moth le Vayer, *de la Vertu des Pa*
ens, &c. To ſpeak nothing of the
putting out their eyes, caſting aw
their riches, retiring from the ſoci
ty of men, that they might devo
themſelves to a contemplative lif
practices which our Chriſtian profe
ſion doth not require, nor the Sc
ptures allow. The former things
ving the approbation of the Wo
of God, and the concurrent pract
of holy men mentioned therein, m
ſhame Chriſtians that have more
ligations upon them, more light, m
means of grace, more aſſiſtance
the Spirit, than theſe heathens

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Lastly, Some may object against this course, that it is very difficult to observe so many rules, and this would make the Christian life very burdensome: To this I answer, First, with *Tertullian*, Apol. cap. 40. *Semper humana gens male de Deo meruit*; God hath always been but little beholding to men, who grudge at every thing that God hath from them: of old they would put off God with any thing, *Mal.* 1. 8, *&c.* but they thought nothing too much for their Idols, *Deut.* 32. 36. no not their children, *Jer* 3. 23. It was ordinary for the heathens to object against the Christian Religion, that it taught many things contrary to reason, when in the mean while their own heathenish superstition contained many things more abhorring from sound reason, than any thing which they could pretend in Christianity, as the Fathers in the Primitive Church

commonly replied in their Apol
gies for the Christians. *Vide* Tertu
de carne Christi, *cap.* 4. Austin
Civitate Dei, *lib.* 1. *cap.* 14. Josep
cont. Apion. *Origen*'s conferen
with *Alexander Severus*, &c. Suc
unequal dealing hath God alwa
had from men. It were enough t
affright men from the profession
Religion, if they should thereb
indanger their lives, yet they s
light by them for maintaining som
point of Honour, and can freely s
crifice them (in a duel) to reveng
or vain glory: many would accou
it a grievous bondage to walk ci
cumspectly, to order all thei
thoughts, words and actions acco
ding to rule, to whom a studie
carriage, and an industrious actin
of the foolish fashions of the tim
is no trouble: It would seem
many a burden too grievous to
born, to be tied to spend that tim
in reading the Scriptures (that th
mig

might learn such savoury speeches as would minister grace to others, *Eph.* 4. 29. and save their own souls to boot, 2 *Tim.* 3. 15.) which they spend in reading Romances, to learn such vain language as they must reckon for another day. How many are there, that would not for all that Heaven is worth, spend so much time every morning, in *adorning the hidden man of the heart,* 1 *Pet.* 3. 3, 4. as they do in adorning the outward man. I shall conclude this first answer with that of *Picus Mirandula*, Ep. 1. ad Nep. *Non potest non extremæ esse demen-tiæ, ibi nolle potius laborare, ubi à labore itur ad mercedem, quàm ubi à labore itur ad supplicium.* It must needs be the greatest folly and madness in the world, to take more pains, and run greater hazards in the ways of sin to go to hell, than they need to do in the ways of God to go to Heaven. Secondly, As

Bishop *Hall* saith, There is nothin
to be gotten by idleness, but miser
here, and Hell hereafter: *The king*
dom of Heaven suffers violence, an
the violent take it by force, Mat. 11
12. A Christians life is a race, a war
fare; and he must run, strive, fight
if he will win the prize, 1 *Cor.* 9. 24
25, 26. he must watch and pray
and arm, and stand fast, and qui
himself like a man, if he will obtai
the Crown, *Mat.* 26. 41. 1 Cor. 16
13. Ephes. 6. 13. Thirdly, Thou
knowest not how difficult thi
course is till thou hast been exerci
sed therein: *Non putant fieri quic*
quid facere non possunt: ex infirm
tate sua de virtute ferunt senten
tiam. Sen. *Ep.* 71. who ever learn
ed any art or mystery, but it seeme
very difficult at first? which practic
afterward makes easie: there is
mystery in practical Godliness,
well as in speculative Divinity
which makes it seem hard at first;

kno

know this is not acquired wholly by induſtry, and exerciſe, as other habits are, but exerciſe doth much facilitate it: Again, Cuſtom is the greateſt Tyrant in the world, *Jer.* 13. 23. whoſe yoak it is an hard matter to caſt off, in thoſe things which afterwards we can eaſily contemn; how vain would thoſe ways of ſin ſeem to many which now they are wedded to? how eaſie would thoſe ways of holineſs ſeem to them, the difficulty whereof doth ſo much affright them? if they would *awake to righteouſneſs, and ſtir up themſelves to take hold on the Lord*, 1 Cor. 15 34. Iſa. 64. 7. not wavering betwixt God and the world, *Jam.* 1. 6. (for then they are like to be driven and toſſed, with every wind of temptation) *but cleaving to the Lord with purpoſe of heart*, Acts 11. 23. *Quàm ſuave mihi ſubito factum eſt, carere ſuavitatibus nugarum? quas amittere metus fuit,*

jam dimittere gaudium fuit, saith *Austin*, Confession, *lib. 9. cap.* 1. he had a long time been dallying with sin, and his thoughts were fluctuating to and fro; but when they came to the consistency of a firm resolution, it was presently a pleasure to him, to want his former delightful vanities; and those things which before he was afraid to lose, he could now joyfully let go.

Finally, This practice will not be so difficult, as you may at first suspect: because these rules which I have laid down, are a great help to each other. One that had never seen a Watch, or such like work of Art, would wonder how so many wheels should keep such a constant orderly motion: whereas one that understands the manner of their motion, knows that one wheel doth protrude or thrust forward another, and that the motion could not easily be so regular, if there were fewer

fewer wheels in it: so it is in this case, one duty puts forward another, and doth dispose us to the practice of another: or as in the body, labour or exercise begets an appetite, when we have an appetite our food is more pleasant to us, and it likewise helps digestion, and so our food doth us more good and strengthens us to labour; so the more we exercise our selves unto Godliness, the more experience we shall have of our own insufficiency, and of the need that we stand in of a daily supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ; and so we shall more prize and endeavour to improve those Ordinances which are the ministration of the Spirit, as Prayer and the Word of God: And therefore if men slight Ordinances, 'tis an ill sign that they have grown negligent in the practice of godliness; for he that sets himself to walk so as he may please God, will find all means

little enough to maintain the vigour of his Grace; and the more we improve our communion with God in Ordinances, the better shall we be enabled to hold on in a course of godliness; so that as it is in the body natural and mystical, one member is useful to another, it is likewise in these duties. I may also add, that the benefits of such a practice, (which I have before recounted) will abundantly recompence any diligence which we can use therein: which hath been confirmed by the experience of those which have been exercised therein: as you may see in Mr. *Rogers* Seven Treatises, where he tells us, *Treat.* 4. *cap.* 11. of divers godly men, who when they were at first put upon such a course as is here prescribed, looked upon it as a thing impossible to be observed; but being perswaded to make trial of it, they freely acknowledged that they found and obtained more

more uſe of their knowledge, more conſtancy in their courſe, and ſweet delight in ſerving of God, than ever they looked for, and hereby they came to be better able to perform duties, to bear croſſes and afflictions, to ſubdue their affections, and to overcome their doubts and fears. Methinks the hope of like ſucceſs, ſhould encourage any that make Religion their buſineſs, to make trial of this practice; thoſe that have more objections yet to make againſt it, may find them anſwered in *Drexelius* his *Triſmegiſtus*, lib. 1. cap. 7. And now Reader, I may conclude with the words of *Tertullian de patientia prin. Confiteor ad Dominum Deum ſatis temere me, ſi non etiam Impudenter, de Patientia componere auſum*, &c. that is, I confeſs unto God I have raſhly, if not ſhameleſly taken upon me to treat of Patience, which I am not at all fit for, as being a worthleſs perſon,

seeing those that attempt to set forth or commend any thing, should be found doing the same thing themselves: or in the words of Bishop *Sales*, in the *Preface* to his *Introduction*; [I confess I have writ of a devout life, without being devout my self; yet not without a desire of being so, and it is this desire which hath given me courage to instruct thee: for as a great Learned man said, To study is a good way to learn, to hear is a better, but to teach is best of all.] The truth is, I entertained the first thoughts of making these Directions thus publick, whilst I was drawing up somewhat for my own use: hoping they might do others more good than my self, which might have better hearts to make use of them, (as indeed I should oft preach with an heavy heart, were it not for hopes that many that hear me, may be more affected with what I speak, than I can

can get my own dull ſoul to be,) but I was further encouraged to this work, when I conſidered what an obligation it would be upon my ſelf, to the moſt earneſt endeavours in the practice of thoſe things which I have thus preſſed upon others: for if I ſhould chooſe my device, it ſhould be thoſe words of the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 2. 21. Which I wiſh I could as oft ſuppoſe my ſelf to hear ſounding in mine ears, as *Jerom* did the laſt Trumpet, *Thou that teacheſt another, teacheſt thou not thy ſelf?* and I deſire this little Book may come into remembrance with me to ſhame me whenever I ſhall (through inadvertency or any other infirmity) ſwerve from theſe Rules my ſelf, which I have here ſet down for the uſe of others.

THE

THE PRACTICE OF Godliness.

LAbour *to improve your acknowledged principles concerning God.* I mean such principles as are generally without dispute, or hesitancy assented to: unless you think the Word of God to be a cunningly devised fable, 2 *Pet.* 1. 16. or that the Kingdom of God is in word only, and not in power, 1 *Cor.* 4. 20. that Religion is but an empty sound, of no use or vertue, let your faith as the Apostle saith of patience, *Jam.* 1. 4. *have its perfect work*, use it as far as it will go, and you

you shall find what an influence it will have upon your whole Conversation. True knowledge is the foundation of all Religion, *Jer.* 22. 16. *Eph.* 4. 18. and that knowledge is not right which is not operative and effectual, 1 *Joh.* 2. 3, 4. Now there are three things more especially, a fixed apprehension and serious consideration whereof, will be of singular use to us in all the passages of our lives.

First, The *All-sufficiency* of God, *Gen.* 17. 1. This makes him the chief good, for this we choose him as our portion, and chief happiness. Now this is the first step which the soul takes towards Heaven, this goes in order before Faith, and Faith is but subordinate hereto, this being the act of the soul about our chief end; Faith respecting the means leading to this end. Why do we believe on Jesus Christ? but that we may by him be brought unto God, 1 *Pet.* 3. 18. these two acts are the brief abridg-

abridgment of the Gospel, *Acts* 20.21. so that we see this is essential to Christianity to take God for our chief happiness. Now if this were but setled in our hearts, how would it ballast them and keep them steddy, that they would not be tossed up and down with the various occurrences of this life, neither lift up with *prosperity*, nor cast down with *adversity*: for whether we have more of these things they make no considerable *addition* to us, God is our happiness and not the Creature; or whether we have less of these things, it is no *diminution* of our happiness, we still have our portion; we are but as a man that hath turned his estate into money, though he have not houses, nor lands, nor flocks, nor herds; yet he hath that *which answers all things*, Eccles. 10.19. so it is with one that hath God for his portion, *whose is the earth, and the fulness thereof*, Hab. 3. 17, 18.

18. 1 Cor. 10.28. 2 Cor. 6.10. Give twenty pounds to a poor man, and you make him, take so much from him, and you undoe him; but it is nothing in a rich man's Purse that hath thousands coming in yearly: let an unbeliever lose the world and he loses all, he complains with *Laban* that his gods are gone; let him have these things in abundance, and he is transported like *Haman*, Esth. 5. 11, 12. but these are small things with him, whose portion the Lord is.

2. A second thing which we should always labour for a serious apprehension of, is God's *omnipresence:* by his essence and common providence, *he is in all places*, Psal. 139. 6, &c. *and he beholds all things that are done by the sons of men*, Heb. 4 13. but he is graciously present in a special manner with his own people, *Isa* 43.2,5. Now to walk before God, to set his presence before our eyes, doth briefly comprehend all Reli-

Religion, *Gen.* 17. 1. *Chap.* 14. 40.

1. This will awe us when we have opportunities and temptations to secret sins, *Gen.* 39. 9 The Story is known of *Paphnutius* who converted an *Harlot* by this means: He put on the Habit of a Soldier, and went to an infamous Woman, as if he were one of her Guests, and he desired to go with her into a private Room where none might see him; she brought him into a Chamber: he complains it was not private enough; she brings him into another, he objects the same; at last, she brings him into the most private Room in the House. He looks about every way, and asks if they were secure there? if none saw them? she answered, none but God or the Devil. And believest thou, saith he, that there is a God? she replied, I do believe it. He adds, and believest thou that he is every where present and seeth all things? she answered,

answered, she did believe it. And shall we, saith he, Sin so shamefully under the Eye of the most just Judge that seeth all things? O thou rash and wicked wretch! art thou so prodigal of thy everlasting Salvation? is this thy chief endeavour that others may perish eternally with thee? dost thou so prize sensual pleasures as to fear neither God nor the Devil? hereupon she fetches a deep groan, having nothing to say for her self, she was ashamed of her wicked life, her eyes ran down with tears, she falls down on her knees, betakes her self to a Cell, lives on bread and water, would not take the Name of God into her mouth, but frequently repeated these words, *Thou who hast made me, have mercy on me*; so she continued three years and died.

2. This would possess us with more *reverence and godly fear in duties of Gods worship*, 1 Cor. 11. 10.

If

If the presence of Angels should do this, much more the presence of God.

3. *This will comfort us in afflictions*, Psal. 23. 4. 25, 1. 5. *Encourage us against fears*, Psal. 16. 8. yea, provoke us to diligence in every good work, *The eye of the master makes a diligent servant*, Col. 3. 22. The Apostle supposes, that those who otherwise are sloathful and negligent, will yet be diligent while their Master's eye is upon them.

3. A third thing which we should always settle in our hearts, is the *universal providence* of God extending it self to every thing which comes to pass here below, to *that which is good*, Gen. 31. 16. 33. 5, 11. *that which is evil*, Isa. 42. 25. Amos 3. 6. to *the least things*, Mat. 10. 28. to those things which are produced by a long series of second causes, *Hos.* 2. 22. *Gen.* 45. 5. to the meerest contingencies, *Pro.* 16. 33. Now besides

beſides the occaſion which we ſhall have hereby given us to adore *the perfections of God in all his works*, *Pſal.* 8. *Job* 37. 14. *Pſal.* 107. 43. we ſhall have this advantage hereby, in the enjoyment of mercies.

Firſt, It will teach us thankfulneſs for them, *Pſal.* 40. 5.

2. Prevent our abuſe of them and teach us to uſe them for God. *Hoſ.* 2. 8. *Ezek.* 16. 19. In afflictions this will teach us firſt to ſubmit patiently to them, as being inflicted by his *authority*, ordered by his wiſe *providence*, 1 Sam. 3. 18. Job 1. 21. Joh. 19. 11. Pſal. 46. throughout.

3. Teach us to make a right uſe of them, *Mic.* 6. 9. *Iſa.* 42. 25. By theſe inſtances which I have ſet down, you may likewiſe be directed how to improve other Articles of your Faith.

Direct. 2. *What ever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of Jeſus Chriſt.* This direction is in the very

very words of the Apostle, *Col.* 3. 17. and though it be a brief direction, yet there is none that is of more general and constant use: it is like the Carpenter's Rule, which he makes use of upon all occasions, there is not an action of our lives wherein we have not some use hereof. Now to do a thing in the name of Christ, imports these three things;

1. To do it by the authority of Christ, *Mat.* 21.23. *Joh.*5.43. 1 *Cor.* 5.4.

2. In the power and strength of Christ, *Mark* 16. 17. *Acts* 3. 12,16. *Psal.* 20. 5.

3. For the sake of Christ, or for his honour, *Luk.* 9. 48. *Mat.* 18.20. So the *Dutch Annotations* on the place, & the learned *Daillè* in his excellent Sermon on the same. 1. Then let us make God of our counsel in whatever we take in hand, (This was a common practice amongst the Heathen, *vatibus solenne fuit nihil serium*

serium numine inconsulto aggredi. Herbert *de veritate.*) *Isa.* 30. 1. *Hos.* 8. 4. 1. Because of the absolute authority that he hath over us, 1 *Cor.* 6. 20. 1 *King.* 18. 21. 2. The dependance we have on his providence, 'tis wisdom to make a vertue of necessity; if we will venture to do a thing without his *moral* permission, or allowance: we cannot do it without his *natural* permission or sufferance, *Isa.* 54. 15. *Jer.* 42. 15. *Hos.* 4. 10. 3. We must give an account to him of our actions; he is our Judg as well as our Lawgiver, *Jam.* 4. 12. 2 *Cor.* 5. 10. 4. When we have God's leave, we may go on with comfort, and confidence, *Prov.* 10. 29. We are under his special care and providence, *Psal.* 84. 11. Mr. *Dod* would say, he cared not where he was, if he could but answer these two questions well, *Who am I?* and *what do I here?* am I a Child of God? and am I in my way? if we were careful of

of the discharge of our duty, we might free our selves from all other care; but as it is the humour of every man naturally, to look more after other mens affairs than his own; so we deal after the same manner with God, we busie our selves about *his work*, the event and success of our affairs, which belong to his providence to order and direct: and in the mean while neglect *our own duty*, leaving that to God, usually upon pretence of the necessity of his determining grace, which doth no more make void our endeavours in *spiritual* actions, than the necessity of the concurrence of his general providence in our *natural* actions.

Now for knowing the mind of God in what we go about, we have his Word to direct us. In particular cases where we have no express rule for our direction, our end must direct us, the edification of souls, 1 *Cor.* 10. 23. and the glory of God, (of

(of which more afterwards;) besides God doth by his providence sometimes, and sometimes by making strong impressions upon the will, *Acts* 20. 22. give some hints of his mind, *vide Valdesso Consid.* 25. but to be sure we must make the former our chief rules to guide us, and follow these last, only when the Word is not clear, and where neither of those mentioned ends which we should propound to our selves, do turn the ballance, but it remains still equally poysed: otherwise we may take the violent inclinations of our own lusts, for an impression of the spirit, and a temptation for a leading providence, *Deut.* 13. 3. See 1 *Sam.* 24. 5, 6, 7.

II. What we do we should do in the strength of Christ, waiting upon him for the concurrence of his general providence in our ordinary, natural, and civil actions, *James* 4. 15. of his more special providence in

in extraordinary actions, 1 *Sam.* 17. 45. 2 *Chron.* 14. 11. and of his ſpecial grace in ſpiritual actions, *Eph.* 6. 10. *Phil.* 4. 13. 2 *Tim.* 2. 1. So that we ſhould *commit all our ways unto the Lord*, Prov. 16. 3. venturing upon nothing in our *Practiſes*, which we dare not commend to God, for a bleſſing in our *Prayers*; our ordinary affairs, we may commit to him by a general recommendation in our daily Prayers: extraordinary affairs by a more particular ſolemn addreſſing our ſelves to him, *Gen.* 32. 10. *Neh.* 1. 4. *Eſth.* 4. 16. ſudden emergencies, by ſhort ſecret ejaculations, *Neh.* 2. 4. This practice would make us deſiſt from many raſh undertakings: we many times unadviſedly ruſhing upon thoſe things which we ſhould not have a face to own before God in Prayer: as the poor man when he had ſtolen a Lamb for the neceſſities of his family, when having made it ready,

he

he came (as his manner was) to pray for a blessing upon it, his heart smote him, so that he could have no peace till he went and acknowledged his sin, and made a promise of restitution.

III. We should do all for the glory of Christ, 1 *Cor.* 10. 32. 1. This is the ultimate end of all things, *Pro.* 16. 4. *Rom.* 11. 36. 2. Though the purity of the end will not correct the viciousness of the means, as the Popish Casuists teach; yet it will sanctifie all our natural and civil actions, adopting them as it were into the number of religious actions, and inscribing them with holiness to the Lord, *Zach.* 14. 21. *Col.* 3. 23, 24.

The poorest servant by discharging his duty in a right manner, and directing his intention aright, may in the meanest employment serve Jesus Christ, and with confidence expect his reward from him.

A Servant with this Clauſe
Makes Drudgery divine,
Who ſweeps a Room as for thy Laws,
Makes that and th' Action fine.

Herbert's *Elixir.*

3. Without this our ſpiritual actions are not good, *Zach.* 7. 7.

4. This will preſcribe a right manner and meaſure to all our lawful actions. I mean ſuch as are in themſelves lawful, as eating, drinking, recreations, and ſuch like: *finis dat modum & menſuram mediis.* And herein Chriſtians had need to be very circumſpect, becauſe they ſin moſt frequently in ſuch actions, *licitis perimus omnes*; it is ſaid of the old world, *Mat.* 24. 38. that *they were eating, drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage*; there was no hurt in theſe actions, if they had obſerved a due ſeaſon, manner, and meaſure in them. Chriſtians ſtartle at ſuch things as ſwearing, lying, ſtealing,

ſtealing, adultery, *&c.* but in the uſe of things lawful, they are more ſecure, and ſo do more eaſily ſlide into a ſinful exceſs.

5. This will direct us (as was before hinted) where our way is doubtful. Where we have expreſs commands, or prohibitions in the Word of God, our way is plain, there is no queſtion to be made, but in many caſes our actions are not determined by any particular direct command, but are left to be guided by Chriſtian prudence; now in ſuch a caſe, our end will be of much uſe to guide us; as a man that is to draw a line, if he have no rule to make it by, he oft caſts his eye upon that term, or point to which it is to be drawn; or if a man have a way to go, and there be no beaten path, if he can ſee the place which he is to go to, his way is to aim at that, and make ſtraight over towards it: ſo when a caſe is doubtful, we ſhould

fix our eye upon the glory of God, and see which way hath the most direct tendency thereto, and take that way. Now though we cannot always have an *actual* intention of the glory of God, yet we should *habitually* intend it, and the more we can *actually* intend it the better; especially in such actions as are of moment in the course of our lives, we should renew our actual intention; and (as we said before) when a case is doubtful we should fix our eye upon this end; as a man that is travelling towards a place, suppose to *London*, he doth not actually think on the place which he goes to every step he takes, but if he come to a place where there are two ways, then he bethinks himself of the place which he is going to, that he may take that way which is more likely to lead him thereto.

And if any ask now how our natural or civil actions conduce

to

to the glory of God? I answer;

First, They may be done to the glory of God, in respect of the manner of them, when we use such moderation, holy fear, heavenly mindedness in these actions, that every one may see holiness written upon them, 1 *Tim.* 6.1. *Tit.*2. 10. when we observe not a Christian *decorum* in our natural and civil actions, it is a dishonour to our profession; *Editur quantum esurientes capiunt*, &c. *We eat (saith* Tertullian *of the Christians,) as much as is necessary to satisfie ones appetite; we drink as much as is permitted to Christians that have a care of their purity; they that sit there take their refreshment with such temperance, as they may remember they are obliged to worship God at night*, Apol. cap. 39.

Secondly, In respect of their ultimate tendency, they may be subservient to the glory of God, though they have not such an im-

mediate connexion therewith, as when we use diligence in our particular callings, that we may have wherewith to supply the necessities of others, *Eph.* 4. 28. to provide for those belonging to our own charge, 1 *Tim.* 5. 8. that we may with the more freedom wait upon God, being exempted from perplexing cares, 1 *Cor.* 7. 35. that we may be freed from the temptations of poverty, and may not be burdensome to others, *Prov.* 30. 9. 1 *Thes.* 4. 11. So when we *study for this end, that we may excel for the edifying of the Church*, 1 Cor. 14. 12. When we eat, drink, use recreations that our bodies may be strengthened, *Eccles.* 10. 17. that so they may be the more fit to serve the soul in its operations, that we may by both soul and body be more fit to honour God in our places; so in our civil visits, we should consider what they will contribute to our chief end, what opportu-

portunity we may have of doing or receiving good; how far our Christian profession requires this of us, that *we may shew all gentleness towards all men*, Tit. 3. 2. *and add to brotherly kindness charity*, 2 Pet. 1. 7.

Direct. 3. *Prize all opportunities of communion with God in his Ordinances*, such as Prayer, reading and hearing the Word, Christian prudence must allot the time for these, according to our occasions, opportunities, necessities, *Psal.* 42. 1, 2. & 63. 1, 2. & 84. 1, 2. & 122. 1.

First, They are our *duty*, part of that homage which we owe to God as our Lord and Lawgiver, by prayer to acknowledge our dependance on him, *Psal.* 65. 2. and our subjection to him by sitting down at his feet to receive the Law from his mouth, to take our instruction from him, *Deut.* 33. 3.

Secondly, They are our *privileges*, which cost two of the greatest

gifts which Heaven could afford, Eph. 2.18. *The Son of God, that we might have acceptance, the Spirit of God, that we might have assistance*; what greater privilege are we capable of, than at any time to go and *reveal our cause to God?* Jer.20.21. to *ease our complaints before him*, to have leave to beg *any thing of him*, Joh.15.8. Luk.11.13. to *ask counsel of him*, Psal.119.24. especially when his Word is the ministration of the Spirit, 2 *Cor.* 3.6. *Gal.*3.2: there being in our communion with God a transfusion of spirits, he communicating his Spirit or divine nature to us therein, 2 *Cor.* 3.18. besides our own pressing necessities which should daily provoke us hereto: *the oftner we come to God the more welcome*, Cant. 2.14. Jer. 2.32. and the more boldness and liberty of access we shall have, disuse and infrequency breeding a strangeness betwixt God and the soul, and deadning

deadning the heart to communion with him.

Direct. 4. *Be very serious in the performance of holy duties*; be careful to joyn therein *attention of mind*. Ezek. 33. 32. *sincerity of heart*, Psal. 145. 18. *intension of affections*, Rom. 12. 11. Acts 27. 7. *and holy fear and reverence*, Heb. 12. 28. Christians are very faulty in this particular; for besides their rude irreverent behaviour in holy duties, when the best supply that we can make to the defect of our Prayers, (after our hearts have been roving and wandering therein, notwithstanding the strictest hand that we can keep over them,) is by recollection of all the strength of our souls to enforce them by an hearty *Amen*. You shall have men off their knees, (if ever they were on them) or ready to run away from the duty when it grows towards an end, as if they were glad that such a task were done. Hence

extemplo, used for quickly, or out of hand; because upon the pronouncing of that word at the end of their worship (as *ilicet* at the dismission of their Civil Courts) they made such haste out of the Temple. Verily, I have oft wondered how such prophaneſs in divine worship should be consistent with the *fear of God*, and yet been loth to condemn those that are guilty of it. I can scarce think of this but I am in *Paul*'s case, *Acts* 17. 16. for (as *Mirandula* saith in another case, That it's a wonder that any should doubt of the truth of the Gospel after so many proofs of it, but a greater wonder that any should believe it, and live as if it were not true, *Ep.* 1. *ad Nepot.*) So it is a wonder that any should be so bruitish as to worship a false god, but a greater wonder, that any worshipping the true God, should worship him as if he were no God. We ought to give the more

more diligent heed herein, because there is the same time spent in the slight performance of duties, which is spent in a right performance of them; and a man had better sow his ground with good seed, though it cost him dear, than with darnel or cockle, though he can have it for nothing: and as we lose the fruit of our duties, and answer of our prayers when we are slight in them, so we lose the sweetness that is to be had in communion with God in them, and that is the reason we come with such dead hearts to duties; and we had need be watchful herein, because Satan is very busie to interrupt us in holy duties, *Luk.* 8. 12. *Zach.* 3. 1. and our own hearts are very apt to wander therein. *Bernard* sadly complains of this in his Meditations, *cap.* 8. and *de domo interiori*, cap. 29, & 33. how he scarce could attend to his own prayers, or mind what he said in them himself,

and

and so lost the fruit of them: See *Dike* on the Heart, *cap.* 21. *Cyprian de Orat. Dom.*

Now for our help therein, let us first consider the nature of God with whom we have to do; he is a great King, and his Name is dreadful, *Mal.* 1. 14. read that Chapter throughout, he will not bear it to be put off with slight services, he will have none of his work done *negligently*, Jer. 48. 10. he will be *sanctified of all such as draw nigh to him*, Lev. 10. 3. he will be *served with fear and trembling*, Psal. 2. 11. trembling at the Word of God is the Character of a godly man, *Isa.* 66. 2, 5. *Ezra* 10. 3.

Secondly, Let us consider the nature of the services wherein we have to do with him, and we may consider them under a threefold notion: First, as *duties*; this will lay an awe upon our consciences, and keep us to a due constant observance

vance of them; it is dangerous to free our consciences from this obligation, by laying aside the opinion of duty, for we see by experience how easily men are tempted to a neglect of those things which they look upon as only matter of liberty, and not as necessary duty. 2. Let us consider them as *privileges*: this will keep us from that weariness which is ready to grow upon us in them, while we consider them only as burdensom tasks, *Mal.* 1. 13. And from resting in the *work done*, which we shall be apt to do if we look upon them only as duties.

3. Let us consider them as *Talents* which we must give an account of, for so they are if we look upon them as means of grace, *Luk.* 12. 48. this will quicken us up to more earnest diligence in the improvement of them. And for Prayer in particular, let me add this one word, whenever we draw nigh to God in it,

it, let us but consider what it is, or what we are about, *viz. The making our requests known to God, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving*, *Phil.* 4.6. that so we may be furnished with expressions, not from our *heads*, but from our *hearts*; that our words may not be fetched from our memories or inventions, but from our real desires and inward affections.

Direct. 5. *Be very careful not to neglect known duties:* We use to observe in polemical Divinity, that the plainest truths are least studied, because they are taken for granted, and so men think they need not busie themselves about them. I wish we could not make the like observation in practical Divinity, though there is not the like reason for the neglect of the *practice* that there is of the *study* of those things which we know, *the end of knowledge is practice*, Deut. 29.29. But so it is usually,

ly, that men are very inquisitive into those things which are doubtful, as if they wanted matter for the exercise of their zeal, or as if they would complement with God as they sometimes do with men, telling him in effect that they do but wait for an opportunity to serve him, when they overlook ordinary acknowledged duties; like the Jews, which were very forward to enquire whether they should fast as they had done formerly, and in the mean while they neglected the duties of morality, *Mic.* 6. 7. the greatest questionists are many times the least doers; but as *Luther* would say, *God loves not Quæristas, but Curristas,* not such as will be always enquiring, but such as will be active or doing: if you would know more of the mind of God in things that are doubtful, do more of what you already know, *Joh.* 7. 17. Mind what is your present duty, what is the

the next ſtep you are to take in the way to Heaven, as the *evil* of the day, ſo the *duty* of the day is ſufficient for it.

Direct. 6. *Labour to know the true bounds of your Chriſtian liberty.* Not that you may walk to the utmoſt extent of it, for the ſatisfying of your natural deſires, nor that you may for any carnal intereſt baſely comply with mens humours; but yet there may be great uſe of this, both in reſpect of our ſelves and others: men do oft lay unneceſſary burdens upon themſelves, binding themſelves (where God hath looſed them) to their own great prejudice, like thoſe 1 *Cor.* 8. 7. inſtances whereof are very obvious. I would not interpret that place, *Eccleſ.* 7. 16. in favour of lukewarmneſs, or to allay mens zeal with the baſe mixture of carnal policy: yet doubtleſs men do ſometimes deſtroy themſelves by too much opinio-

pinionativeness and self-conceit, or over-rigidly insisting on some things where God allows them a greater latitude. See Dr. *Reynolds* on this place, in his most excellent Commentary on *Ecclesiastes* in the larger English *Annotations.*

But Christians do usually most wrong others hereby: First, In judging them, and casting them out of their charity for those things which they have liberty in, or which they may lawfully do: *Strong Christians are not more ready to despise the weak, than the weak are to judg the strong,* Rom. 14. 3. and I know not which is the greater sin; the former for the most part is worse in respect of its principle from whence it proceeds, but the latter in respect of the effects of it. But secondly, We further wrong others, in that we do not leave our selves a liberty where God hath left it us, for accommodating our selves to them, and pleasing them

them *for their good to edification*; or as others have it, *in that which is good*; where we have the true bounds set to man-pleasing, for the matter it must be in that which *is good*; we must not please their sinful humours, or comply with their corrupt lusts. Then there must be a right end, it must be for *their edification*, Rom. 15. 2. and this rule the Apostle himself put in practice, 1 *Cor.* 9. 19. *Chap.* 10. 33.

Direct. 7. *Labour to make the best improvement of your time.* The Apostle indeed exhorts to *redeem time*, *Eph.* 5. 16. which is an expression of doubtful signification, and capable of various interpretations; but in propriety of speech, time that is lost is not to be redeemed; we cannot possibly recover misspent time; redeeming time is alike impossible as merit, *Luk.* 17. 10. because all that we can do in our time is our duty;

and

and it is not in *morals* as in *naturals*, where by resting one hour we are able to work more vigorously another, but the more remiss we are, the greater indisposition we bring upon our selves. If a man suffer weeds to grow in his field; though he pluck them up before they seed, or soyl his corn, yet he loses so much ground as they grow upon: so though God should pardon the mispending of our time, yet we shall lose the fruit of what we might have (in that time) *sown to the Spirit:* and as good husbands will lose none of their ground, but have every parcel bring them forth something, so we should endeavour that every parcel of our time may be sown with some seed of righteousness; yea, we should make some improvement of that time in which we do the works of our particular callings to some spiritual advantage, (if our imployments be such

as

as exercise the hand and not the head) by some useful Meditations; as some will plant their hedgrows with fruit trees, reckoning that what they get thereby is clear gain, because they take up no room which might be put to any other use; so what we get by such meditations is clearly gained, because it doth not hinder any other imployment. But as it is not enough for the husbandman to sow all his ground, but he must observe what agrees best with this or that grain, and as it is not sufficient that he be always employed, unless he observe the due season for his several affairs, so it is not sufficient that we be always doing that which is materially good, but there must be a prudent choice of the fittest season for every action, for *there is for every purpose a time and judgment, therefore is the misery of man great upon him*, because

cause so few men have the wisdom *to know time and judgment*, Eccl. 8. 5, 6. but he is the blessed man, that *brings forth fruit in its season*, Psal. 1. 3. Yet let not your *souls enter into the secrets* of those, who seeming to themselves to have a perfect understanding of the times and seasons wherein the things foretold in Scripture shall have their accomplishment, think themselves bound to attempt such things as they suppose may be helpful to the bringing forth of that which divine providence seems to be travelling with, calling this *the work of the day, or of their generation.* The good man *Moses* ran into this mistake, but he was glad to flee for it, and keep sheep forty years, till he had a more clear call from God, to undertake that work which he before knew God had designed him for, *Acts* 7. 23, &c. More particularly, let us endeavour to improve

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our time well when we are in *company*, and when we are *alone*, for *society* and *solitude* share our time. First, In company, let us labour to do good or to get good, at least that we do no hurt nor receive any: and to that end, avoid (as much as may be) the society of those with whom we are like neither to do or receive good, and those are such as are prophane scorners, and such as are meerly carnal, and are much our superiours. And when you are in company, make conscience of your words; 1. Because we are very apt to offend in them, *Jam.* 3. 2,6. We may complain of most mens discourses as *Bernard Apolog. ad Guil. Abbat. Nihil de Scripturis, nihil de salute agitur animarum, sed nugæ & risus & verba proferuntur in ventum*; they are all froth and vanity, there is nothing in them of the Scripture, or of the salvation of mens souls. 2. There is special *notice*

tice taken of them, Mal. 3. 16. *Ita fabulantur ut qui sciant Dominum audire*, saith *Tertullian* of the ancient Christians, *Apol. cap.* 39. they so talk as those who know that God hears them. So *Psal.* 139. 4. Remember the story of him that heard a pen writing behind the curtain while he was under examination, which made him look more narrowly to his words. And 3. *We must give an account of them*, Mat. 12. 36, 37. and that we may never want matter of useful discourse, let us always be furnished with some profitable questions to propound, 1 *King.* 10. 1, &c. which we may be supplied with, either from what we hear or read daily of the Word of God, or some passages of God's Providence, or our own experience, and this will be useful both to our selves and others, we may hereby increase our own knowledge, and give others occasion for imploying their

their Talents, which many times lye wrapped up useless, either through too much reservedness or slowness of speech, or an over-awing modesty, or because men know not so well how to suit their discourses to the conditions and capacities of others: and it will not be altogether in vain to propound questions to those that are our equals or below us in understanding. We may likewise take occasion from ordinary occurrences to raise spiritual discourses, which was Christ's usual practice, *Joh.* 4. 10. 6, 26. but it is ever necessary that we observe the tempers, faculties, abilities, capacities, conditions of those with whom we have to do, that we may accommodate our selves (as far as may be) thereunto; this will render our society more acceptable to others, more profitable both to others and our selves. By observing mens tempers we may the more easily insinuate

nuate what we please into them: by observing their faculties and abilities, we may both please them and profit our selves: because men love to discourse of things belonging to their own faculties, or wherein their abilities chiefly lye, and about those things we may expect the most satisfying answers from them, if they be such things as may be any advantage to us to know: if we suit our discourses to mens conditions, it will add much *grace and comeliness to our speech*, Prov. 15. 23. & 25. 11. but if we do not in all things apply our selves to mens capacities, we shall but weary them, and what we labour to pour into them will run beside, *Joh.* 16. 12. *Rom.* 14. 1. But remember still to be *swift to hear, slow to speak*, Jam. 1. 19. to *shew all meekness towards all men, to speak evil of none*, unless you be called thereto, *Tit.* 3. 2. to be sparing of your promises, and as sparing of your secrets,

unless to such, whose faithfulness you have good experience of, or unless they leave as much in pawn with you as you trust with them: for by imparting our secrets to others, we oft put our selves into their power, so that they have a check upon us, according to that, *Scire volunt secreta domûs atque inde timeri*, Juven. Sat. 13.

And lastly, Joyn prudence with innocence, that you may neither do wrong nor receive any, *Mat.* 10. 16. *Psal.* 101. 2.

2. Labour to spend your time well when you are alone; *Take heed to your spirits*, Mal. 2.17. there is the *beginning of all mischief*, Mat. 15. 19. then is the season for Satan to come and deal with us about his works of darkness, which he hath to put us upon, therefore we should prevent him by some good and profitable exercise; if *David* had taken this course, 2 *Sam.* 11. how much evil might

might it have prevented? how much work have we lying upon our hands to take up every spare minute of our lives? how many things are we ignorant of, which we may imploy our solitary time about, in informing our selves by reading the Word of God, or using the help of others, which we have ready at hand in such abundance? or if we cannot read the Scriptures, or some other good Books, as in a Journey, or in our Beds in the night, how much work have we to do upon our hearts? How many affections to quicken by holy Meditation? how many doubts to resolve, and questions to answer concerning our own spiritual condition by self-examination? And for your help in these exercises,

1. Labour to have the *Word of God dwelling richly in you*, Prov. 6. 12. Mat. 12. 35.

2. Have this good treasure in your heart disposed into some order, when our thoughts lye on a confused heap, we cannot so easily find out what we have occasion to use, let us sometimes *look upward to God*, consider his Nature, his Attributes, *Psal.* 104. 34. his Wisdom, Goodness, Power, Faithfulness, which he hath proclaimed in his Word, manifested in his Works, especially in that work of his manifold Wisdom, which is the subject of Angels meditation, *Eph.* 3. 10. 1 *Pet.* 1. 11. Sometimes be *looking backward on the ways of Gods providence toward you*, Ps. 139. 8, *&c.* 2 Sam. 22. 1, *&c.* *or your ways towards God*, 1 Tim. 1. 13. Sometimes *look downwards into your own hearts*, see what work of God you can find there, what remainders of sin are still there. Sometimes *look forward towards your end*, Meditate on Death, Judgment, Heaven,

Heaven, Hell. So there are other *useful Subjects*, as the love of God, the excellency of Christ, the vanity of the World, the sinfulness of sin, the deceitfulness of the heart, which Christians of ordinary capacities that are acquainted with the Scriptures, and use to hear Sermons, may easily improve by Meditation to the quickning of their affections, and strengthening their resolutions, and make your choice of these Subjects to meditate on according to your present state; as in prosperity oft be thinking of such things as may keep your hearts low, as your former condition, and God's gracious providence in raising you up, if your condition have formerly been worse, *Gen.* 32. 10. 2 *Sa* 7. 18. however of the vanity of the creature, the brevity of life, the joys of Heaven, *&c.* in adversity choose such matter of Meditation, as may be most fit to work you to pa-

tience and contentedneſs, *Mic.* 7. 9. *Ezr.* 9. 13. and then alſo *make diligent ſearch into your own hearts and ways*, to find out what may probably be the cauſe of God's contending with you, *Pſ.* 77. 6. *Job* 10. 2. & 34. 31, 32.

3. Raiſe up matter of holy Meditation from earthly things; God doth done much for our help in this exerciſe, by holding forth heavenly myſteries in his Word, in ſimilitudes taken from earthly things, ſo that almoſt every creature, every action may ſuggeſt ſome uſeful Meditation to us; if we be travelling, if we ſee a pleaſant way, and much company, we do not conſider theſe things, but what way it is that leads to the place we go to; ſo though *the way of ſin be pleaſant to the fleſh, and moſt walk in it*, Mat. 7. 13, 14. that ſhould be no temptation to us, becauſe that doth doth not lead to Heaven whither we go. If we meet with bad lodging or mean

mean entertainment at our Inn, we know it is but for a night, and we shall have better when we come to our journeys end, so though we have but bad entertainment in this world, we are but strangers, this is but our Inn, we shall be better accommodated when we come to those *Mansions which Christ is gone before to prepare for us*, Joh. 14. 2. The like Meditations may be raised from most occurrences of our life.

Direct. 8. *Let us continually set before us the perfect pattern of our Lord Jesus.* We are more easily led by examples than precepts, and Christ is the only perfect pattern; others are to be followed so far only as they follow him, 1 *Cor.* 11. 1.

Not that all the actions of Christ are imitable; he was not meer man, but God also, and Mediatour betwixt God and Man; and what he

did as God, or as Mediator we cannot imitate him in; but there are divers things wherein the Scripture propounds his examples to us for imitation; As,

1. *Love*, Eph. 5. 1,2. 1 Joh. 3. 16.
2. *Meekness and Humility*, Mat. 11. 29. Joh. 13. 14. Rom. 15. 3.
3. *Self denial*, Mat. 16. 24. Phil. 2. 3, *&c.* 2 Cor. 8. 9.
4. *Patience*, 1 Pet. 2. 21.
5. *Making it his work to do good*, *Act.* 10. 38. And these are graces which carry a great stroak in all the passages of our lives.

Now the example of Christ doth not only serve for our direction, so as we should oft think with our selves in the conduct and management of the affairs of our life, what Christ himself would do, or how he would carry himself in such a case, were he upon earth again as formerly, that we may behave our selves after the same manner. But

2. It

2. It may be for our encouragement; he is of a mean, base spirit, that will not follow where his General leads; *Malus miles est qui imperatorem gemens sequitur.* Sen. *Ep.* 107. Therefore *Cato* when he was to lead his Souldiers through a place of danger and difficulty, told them he would go before them, and they should not see him drink while they were thirsty, nor take his ease while they were weary, nor see any thing in him which should difference him at all from a common Souldier, *Lucan. l.* 9. So Christ may say to us, *He took upon him the meanest condition*, Phil. 2. 6. there is nothing which he calls us to suffer, but he hath suffered worse for us, why should not we then *take up our cross and go after him?* Yea, 2. After his suffering he was *crowned with glory*, Heb. 12. 2, 3. So, *If we suffer with him, we shall also be glorified with him*, Rom. 8. 17. Mat. 19. 28.

Direct. 9. *Every night take an account of the passages of the day past. Vid.* Bald. *de conscient. l.* 4. *c.* 2. *cas* 2. Examine your selves, how you have observed the fore-mentioned rules, what the constant frame of your heart hath been, what you have done, upon what grounds, whether it have been with the warrant of God's Word, for what end, whether it hath had any tendency to the glory of God, and subserviency to your chief end; whether that hath been in your intention; what opportunities you have neglected of communion with God, what hath been the carriage of your heart in holy duties, how you have behaved your selves in company, what good you have done, whether any have been the better for you, or you for them, what you have taken into *the good treasure of your hearts, and what you have laid out*, Mat. 12. 35. what temper your heart hath been in

in when alone: and ſo you may go over the ſeveral paſſages of the day. Hereby you will always be in ſome good preparation for death, it will not ſurprize you wholly unready; when you daily caſt up your accounts, you will be better acquainted with your own ſpiritual eſtate; you will ſee what progreſs you make in the way towards Heaven, what ground you gain of your corruptions, where Satan hath moſt advantage againſt you, what ſin you are moſt frequently overtaken with, what is the weakeſt place of your ſoul; you will likewiſe be kept hereby from lying long in any ſin unrepented of: if *David* had conſtantly obſerved this courſe, he had never lien ſo long as he did in carnal ſecurity; you may likewiſe do well to take ſpecial notice of the paſſages of God's providence towards you. And to keep a record or journal of the more remarkable paſſages of your

your lives, is a practice commended by divers godly men from their own experience. For direction wherein, see Mr. *White* in his Treatise of the *Power of Godliness*, and Mr. *Bedle* in his *Diary of a thankful Christian.* And further this review of God's dealings with you, and your carriage towards him, will furnish you with matter of confession, petition, thanksgiving, and put you upon the fresh exercise of your faith, and renewing your hold on Jesus Christ in your Evening Prayers.

Direct. 10. *Awake with God in the Morning.* I have disposed of this Rule here, because of the dependance which it hath on that which goeth before: This was *David's* practice, *Psal.* 139.17,18. How precious are thy thoughts! *i. e.* the thoughts which I have of thee; the affix in the Hebrew Notes oft the Object, and not the Subject, as *Gen.* 16. 5. *Jer.* 32. 40.

1. *God*

1. *God visits us every morning*, *Job* 7. 18. *Lam.* 3. 23.

2. Then our hearts are fittest for heavenly Meditation, when our spirits are refreshed, and our hearts have not yet been intangled with the things of the world.

3. If holy thoughts do not first take place, Satan will soon thrust in. *Our hearts are* (as *Bernard* saith) *like a mill that grinds every thing that is put upon it, whether good or bad*, *Med. Devot. cap.* 10. See there how he complains of the sad effect of giving way to evil thoughts, how his heart was thereby estranged from the love of heavenly things.

4. This is necessary for getting our hearts into a right frame, for walking with God all the day: if we would have our watch go right all the day, we must wind it up in the morning; so we had need to wind up our hearts every morning, if we would *order our conversation aright.*

aright. 1. Then let us meditate on the goodness of God towards us, particularly the night past, our protection, preservation, refreshment, that God should think of us, when we cannot think of him, take care of us, when we can take none of our selves; watch over us while we sleep, keep us from sleeping the sleep of death; and bethink your selves, what thanks you should render to the Lord for his gracious dealings with you; and how you may return the use of that life to him, which he restores to you every Morning. And to this end, 2. Review the account which you took of your selves the night before: See wherein it was that you was most easily overtaken, where Satan got an advantage against you, whether you were not ready to offend with your tongue in company, whether your heart did not steal from you in holy duties, whether vain thoughts did not

not devour the time of your ſolitude, what baits you found your hearts moſt ready to riſe to, what are the uſual out-goings of your hearts, what evil haunts they have; whether pride and vain-glory, ſenſuality, raſh anger, peeviſhneſs, impatience, or what other ſin hath the greateſt advantage againſt you: and conſider, what temptations you are like to meet with that day, which may moſt endanger you; and having found out the *plague of your own hearts*, 3. Furniſh your ſelves with the ſtrongeſt arguments againſt ſuch a ſin, (which you may gather up as you meet with them in your hearing or reading) and inforce them upon your own ſouls, by communing with your hearts, till you have brought your ſelves to ſome fixed reſolutions of *cleaving to the Lord*, Act. 11. 23. Pſal. 119. 106. Some adviſe us for the confirming our reſolutions, to lay ſome penalty

ty upon our ſelves every time we fail of making them good. Of which you may ſee ſeveral inſtances in *Drexelius* his *Triſmegiſtus Chriſtianus*, lib. 1. cap. 6. But although ſome of them ſavour too much of Popiſh Superſtition, yet godly ſorrow doth work an holy revenge, 2 *Cor.* 7. 11. which we may take upon our ſelves, by denying our ſelves the uſe of our lawful liberty in thoſe things wherein we have abuſed it, or wherein we are in danger again to abuſe it, if we ſhould take it: and watching our own hearts, as we would watch a thief, when we are caſt upon ſuch temptations, as we have formerly been eaſily enſnared by, *Prov.* 23. 1, 2. 4. Having by the forementioned Meditations brought our hearts to ſome fixed reſolutions, let us not truſt to our own purpoſes, but in the next place, go to God, in whom we have both *ſtrength and righteouſneſs*, Iſa.

Isa. 45. 24. and *commit the keeping of our souls to him in well-doing*, 1 Pet. 4. 19. And as we may be furnished with matter for our prayers in the evening, from the account which we take of our selves, so in the morning from our early Meditations, and that is the reason why I have not (as many others that write exercises of devotion) either set down any Form of Prayer, or directed you to any, he will not need any Form of Prayer that practises these duties, to lead his affections, or teach him to express his desires before God in secret, and for family-duties, it is not my purpose here to treat of them. And if any shall object, That this exercise in the Morning, requires more time than they can spare, being forced to arise to their labour as soon as they awake. I answer, Christians may abound in these things, as their occasions will allow them. Some, I know,

know, cannot spend so much time in them as others, but they may be the briefer; and if they should have no more time to spare, than while they are putting on their cloaths, they may briefly run over some such things in their thoughts, as I have directed them to, and make a supply to the want of time, by a more *earnest intention of their minds*, to what they are exercised in.

HAving in the foregoing *Directions* commended the work of *Self-examination* to Christians, as an exercise which may justly challenge a part of their solitary hours, & considering how unskilful many are therein, and yet how needful it is for getting and maintaining assurance, which is not only so generally desired of all Christians, but of such use to us, in the performance of *Duties*, bearing *Afflictions*, resisting

reſiſting *Temptations*: (three things wherein our Chriſtian buſineſs chiefly lies) I have thought good to add ſomething here for the help of the weak therein: I know many have at large treated of this thing, and to more ſatisfaction than I can here expect to give: yet it will (I believe) be an advantage to ſome, to have theſe brief Directions at hand, and others which need them not, may let them alone, and they will be no burden to them. I ſhall comprize what I have to ſay herein under theſe two Directions.

1. *Make choice of fit rules to meaſure your condition by.*

2. *Be careful rightly to apply your ſelves to theſe Rules, that you may make a true judgment of your condition thereby.*

For the firſt, The *Rule* that you meaſure your ſelf by, muſt be neither *too long*, nor *too ſhort*, but *adequate* to the ſtate of a Chriſtian; that

that is, it must not be so long as that all Christians cannot reach it, nor so short as that it will not reach a true Christian, but such as will fit every sincere believer, and none else. Some judge of themselves by such trials or evidences, as are competent only to those that are of an high growth in Christianity, and have attained to a great measure of grace: These hearing some (perhaps) glorying in their spiritual enjoyments; and attainments (the testimony of the Spirit, the sweet raviſhments of their souls in communion with Jesus Christ, their contempt of the world, (whether justly or no, God knows.) And others in describing the state of a Christian, shewing rather what of *right* it should be, than what *indeed* it is, what Christians ought to be, rather than what they find themselves to be. Or it may be reading in Scripture the high strains of others devotion,

votion, as *David's panting after God*, Pſal. 42. 1, *&c.* His *following hard after him*, Pſal 63. 8. His *dwelling with God by heavenly Meditations*, Pſal. 139. 17, 18. *Paul's holy zeal*, Act. 20. 24. His *deſire of being with Chriſt in glory*, Phil. 1. 23. The ſtability and evenneſs of his ſpirit in *every condition*, Phil. 4. 12. They begin to lament their own condition; alas, it is not thus with me; how unlike am I to others of the children of God? Theſe are things which I am ſo far from having attained to, that I deſpair of ever reaching them. But I may (with a little alteration of the Apoſtles words, 2 *Cor.* 10. 12.) ſay of theſe, *That meaſuring themſelves with others, they are not wiſe.* Theſe things may ſerve for the *trial* of the *growth* of their grace, not of the *truth* of it: They may diſcover their imperfections; not their unſoundneſs: They may be matter of humiliation

liation and emulation to such as have not attained thereto, but not of discouragement or despair. Others on the other hand, bless themselves in a fair civil deportment, in a specious performance of duties, of justice and charity towards men, and piety towards God. Now, these things are good, and it is both honourable to our Christian profession, and comfortable to our selves, to have the testimony of our consciences concerning these things, but these alone do not reach the state of a true believer; *Paul* attained thus far before his conversion, *Phil.* 3. 5, *&c.* So that you see without a careful observation of this first Rule, which I have set down; We shall be in danger, either of disquieting our selves with *needless fears*, or flattering our selves with vain and *groundless hopes.*

2. *You must carefully apply your selves to these Rules.* If a man have the

the most exact measure or rule, if he do not rightly apply what he hath to measure thereunto, but either ruffle it up, or stretch it too much out, he will never take a right measure of it. Christians are usually very inquisitive after true Marks or Evidences of a justified person, and when they come to a Minister to consult about their spiritual condition, or hear them upon an Use of Examination, they expect presently to hear, whether they shall be saved or damned: as if Ministers could as infallibly tell them their future condition, as Conjurers pretend to tell men their Fortune; when alas, after all the Directions that we are able to give, the greatest work remains for Christians to do themselves; and if they be not faithful to themselves therein, it is impossible for us to help them.

1. Then labour to be well acquainted with your own hearts, observe

ſerve diligently the carriage of them, their riſing to, or cloſing with the baits of Satan: their compliance with temptations: their reſentments after ſlips or falls, how they are affected with them, the outgoings of them towards God, and towards the Creature, what are their uſual haunts. In ſhort, be as curious and critical in obſerving your ſelves, as thoſe who are the greateſt buſie bodies in other mens matters, can be in the obſervation of others; that ſo you may not be ſtrangers at home, but may according to the ſage precept of the *Heathen*, *Know your ſelves.* This is the beſt knowledge, next to the knowledge of God in Chriſt, *Multæ ſcientiæ hominum, ſed nulla melior eſt illa quâ cognoſcit homo ſeipſum.* Bern. *de inter. Do. cap. 29. princ.*

2. Do not judge your ſelves by any particular action, or by the frame of your ſpirit at ſome ſeaſons;

sons; for an hypocrite may sometimes do that which is materially good, as a godly man may sometimes do that which is evil; whereof *David*, *Samson*, *Peter*, and others in Scripture, are sad instances; so a wicked man may sometimes have his heart in a serious frame, under the smart of some *outward affliction*, (when sense convinces them of that, which at other times they are backward to believe) as, *Psal.* 78.34. or under powerful convictions of the Word, as those compared with the *stony ground*, Luk. 8. 13. So a godly man may sometimes be in a woful frame, as *David*, 2 Sa. 11. one would have thought that had never known him before, that he had been a man of a seared conscience, that had sung away care, and banished the fear of God from before his eyes, and *Jonah* was little better, *Jon.* 4. 9. but we must observe, what is the constant habitual frame of our hearts, and

the ordinary carriage of our lives. A godly man in Scripture is described, not by his particular actions, but by his walking, which imports his ordinary course, and the general tenour of his conversation, *Ps.* 1. 1. & 119. 1. *Rom.* 8. 1. Indeed to be frequently overtaken with sin, is an ill sign, yet to determine, how oft a godly man may be overtaken by temptation, or how many sinful actions are inconsistent with sincerity, is as impossible in *Divinity*, as to determine in *Morality*, how many *actions* go to the acquiring of an *habit*. In such a case there is much need of a spiritual discerning, and a prudent weighing of particular circumstances, for the making of a right and safe judgment.

3. In judging our selves, we must have some respect to natural temper and inclinations, and to the temptations which our condition lays us most open to. A little sugar serves for

for sweet wines, but there is more required to sweeten that which is more sharp; so, a little grace makes a great shew in some tempers, and a great deal scarce appears in others; as an eminent man said, of one now in Heaven, That he had grace enough for ten other men, but scarce enough for himself, which he would himself bewail, saying, he had such a crooked nature, that if God had not given him grace, none would have been able to live a day with him. So likewise the more inoffensive lives of some men may be imputed rather to the want of temptations, than to a greater measure of grace. The truth is, a man's sincerity is much discovered, in keeping him *from his own iniquity*, Psal. 18. 23. (*Est virtus placitis abstinuisse bonis*, Ovid.) and overcoming temptations, when he is *assaulted therewith*, Prov. 24. 10. Yet let a man have an equal tincture of super-

natural grace in all the affections of his ſoul; Let the Spirit of God diffuſe it ſelf like leaven, indifferently through the whole lump; yea, let a man beſtow alſo the moſt care in watching his own heart, in ſome particular outgoings of it, he ſhall notwithſtanding find himſelf moſt defective in that very thing; and (as Dr. *Preſton* rightly obſerves) thoſe ſins are with the moſt difficulty mortified, which our natural temper doth moſt diſpoſe us to. Some affections are more predominant in one age, ſome in another: There are *youthful luſts*, 2 Tim. 2. 22. and infirmities more proper to old age, as covetouſneſs, peeviſhneſs, fear, ſuſpicion, *&c.* So God likewiſe ſuits mens tempers many times to the imployments which he reſerves them for. *Moſes* was the *meekeſt man on earth*, Num. 12. 3. and ſo he had need to be, who had ſuch a perverſe provoking generation of men to deal with. *Luther*

was

was a fierce hot ſpirited man, and he was thereby fitted for the work which he had to do. which was to ſtand as a brazen wall againſt the whole world; and choler is not only *Cos ingenii*, to whet the wit (as the Philoſophers ſay) but it adds vigour and activity to mens ſpirits, fitting them for action, as the ſting in the Bee, without which ſhe is but a drone. And I am inclinable to think, that *Luther* had as much of the *grace* of *meekneſs*, as of *charity* or *bounty*; but being of a *generous ſpirit* naturally, he would ſay, he never found the leaſt inclination to covetouſneſs, whereas his paſſionate fierceneſs made his converſation very unpleaſing, and put poor *Melanchthon* to cry out,

Vince animos, iramque tuam, qui cætera vincis.

So for temptations, they may make thoſe graces yield, wherein

Chriſtians do moſt excel, as we ſee in the caſe of *Job*, who was an *eminent example of patience*, Jam. 5. 11. yet we do not obſerve in his ſtory that any grace which he had gave out ſo much as his patience, becauſe that bare the burden and heat of the day; his condition did moſt exerciſe that. And this muſt be obſerved both in judging our ſelves, and others; thou perhaps ſeeſt more failings in another than in thy ſelf; be it ſo, and that thou art not partial to thy ſelf, yet this may be, not becauſe thou haſt more *grace*, but becauſe he hath more *temptations*.

4. Take heed that thy grace do not make thee to think thy ſelf graceleſs, or at leaſt leſs gracious than thou art. There are ſome things which make Chriſtians ſeem leſs in their own eyes, than they are: and that is the reaſon why we ordinarily hear thoſe, who may be

be thought to have the beſt hearts, making the ſaddeſt complaints againſt themſelves. There are many graces, the more a Chriſtian hath of them, the worſe he thinks of himſelf: 1. The more *knowledge* a Chriſtian hath, the more he ſees of the extent of the Law of God, and the more clear apprehenſion he hath of his duty; and ſo he ſees more of his own defects. We ſhall ſee that this made *Paul* think worſe of himſelf after his converſion, than he did before; if we compare *Phil.* 3. 5, 6. with *Rom.* 7. 9. 2. The more *livelineſs* and *tenderneſs* of *ſpirit* a Chriſtian hath, the more ſenſible he is of his corruption; as thoſe who are more tender and delicate, are more troubled at ſuch things as are offenſive to them, than thoſe who are of a more dull heavy temper. 3. The more *humility* a man hath, the meaner thoughts he hath of himſelf, and of his ſervices. 4. The

more *love* a man hath to Jesus Christ, the more free he is of his service to him; and, so more affected with his own infirmities, when he falls short of what he hath an heart to do for him. 5. The more the soul *hungers and thirsts after righteousness*, the less doth any measure of grace seem, which it hath already received: as a covetous man, who thirsts after more wealth, is always complaining of his poverty, and thinks that to be nothing which he hath already. And as the best Christians do oft thus wrong themselves; so others that have less of these graces, are prone to think too highly of themselves.

Now before I conclude, I must say something in answer to a Question, which will be easily occasioned, by what hath been already spoken. Since we are to try our selves by an adæquate Rule, and by such Evidences as are competent to all justified

fied persons, and to them only, *What are those proper Characters of a true Christian?* I cannot here discourse at large of the several graces of the Spirit, and shew how they may be distinguished from their counterfeits: yet that I may do something towards the satisfaction of Christians in this particular; I shall first endeavour to explain the true Nature of saving Faith, and then to discover so far as I am able, what is the genuine temper and disposition of a child of God.

For the first, It is that which our salvation depends upon, and I chuse always to describe it, in the words of our common *Catechism*, which I would never willingly swerve from, but keep close to, that so Christians may be more secure in entertaining the truth, and free from suspicion of being misguided by the singular notions of a private spirit. Now there it is described, *A saving grace,*

whereby we receive Jeſus Chriſt, and reſt upon him for ſalvation, as he is offered to us in the Goſpel. I confeſs, I do not look upon this as an accurate definition of Faith, properly ſo called; yet, as conſonant to the Scriptures manner of teaching. Divinity being a practical Diſcipline, the Holy Ghoſt in Scripture doth not define things, as a Philoſopher, by their *genus & differentia*, but by their *effects*. See the Scriptures definition of *wiſdom*, Job 28. 28. of *knowledge*, Jer. 16. 22. of *faith*, Heb 11. 1. of the *fear of God*, Prov. 8. 13. of the *love of God*, 1 Jo. 5. 3. of *Religion*, Jam. 1. 27. Faith is properly an aſſent to any thing upon the authority of him that affirms it, and ſo more particularly, divine Faith is an aſſent to any truth upon God's authority: but becauſe it is not ſo eaſie to make a right judgment of the acts of the under-

understanding, as they have an existence in their Subject, however we may speak something of the difference of them, as they are in their *Idea*. The Scripture takes notice of them when they come lower into the Will, and observes what work they make, or what effect they have there, and thereby judges, whether they be right or no. But let me a little explain this description of Faith, that so we may the better understand the nature of it. It is called a *Grace*, because it is a *gift freely given*, Eph. 2. 8. *a saving grace*, because it is one of those things which accompany salvation, *Mark* 16. 16. It is said to be a *grace whereby we receive Jesus Christ*. Now I confess I do not see that the place usually alledged for the proof hereof, *Joh.* 1. 12. doth convincingly prove it, since it may be otherwise expounded: what inconvenience would follow, if we should take the word

word *receive* in a larger sense, as it is used *Matth.* 10. 14. and the words following not *exegeticè*, as an exposition of what went before, but *restrictivè*, as a limitation thereof. The like restriction we have, *Psal.* 145. 18. yet Faith may properly be called *a receiving of Jesus Christ*, it being the first act of the Will about the *means* leading to our end; which act the *Schoolmen* call *Election* (hence I suppose Dr. *Ames*, *Rolloc*, and others borrow this term, which they make use of in explaining the Nature of Faith,) which they make to be, an *accepting* of this or that means, or choosing it before others, (by the approbation of the judgment) as best conducing to the attainment of our end. Or to speak more plainly, and properly (which is best,) if we consider Jesus Christ as the *gift of God, offered to us in the Gospel*, as is expressed in the fore-going description,) Faith is our

our receiving of him, accepting of God's offer, *Taking hold on God's Covenant*, striking hands with him, consenting freely that Christ shall be ours. I cannot stand here to examine how necessary our acceptation is, to the making a thing our own, or a gift properly to us: Or, whether a man may in any case have, not only *Jus ad rem*, or *title*, but *Jus in re*, or *possession*, without his consent or acceptance: remembring the end of my discourse, which such disquisitions would have little tendency to. *Vid.* Mestrezat. *de la Vertu de la Foy.* pag. 97. Therefore to proceed; It is added in this Description of Faith, *That it is a resting upon Jesus Christ for Salvation.* The former words do aptly express the first *Act* of *Faith*, which is the souls fixing, or pitching upon Christ in its choice, as the only sufficient means of Salvation. These words hold forth the *porro esse*, (as I may speak)

ſpeak) of *Faith*, or the *continued Act of it*, upon the ſouls *former choice*. So that as a learned man; (Dr. *Wallis* in his moſt ingenuous anſwer to the Lord *Brook*) doth well obſerve, It is all one whether we make Faith to be a *receiving* of Chriſt for our Saviour, or a *reſting* upon him for Salvation. Some chooſe to expreſs it by the former Act, ſome by the latter: for the latter doth neceſſarily *ſuppoſe* the former, and the former immediately *infer* the latter, if we conſider how Chriſt is offered in the Goſpel, that is, as the *only Saviour*, *Acts* 4. 12. and as a *ſufficient Saviour*, Heb. 7. 25. But here obſerve, That by a *reſting on Jeſus Chriſt*, we do not mean a *confirmed hope*, or a certain expectation of Salvation by Jeſus Chriſt: This is an *effect* of aſſurance, but the *leaning*, *rolling*, *ſtaying* of the ſoul upon Jeſus Chriſt, which we may conceive of, by the notion which the Scripture oft holds it forth

forth under, a *looking to him*, or *having our eyes towards him.* Read 2 *Chron.* 20. 12. *Psal.* 121. 1. and 123. 1, 2. *Isai.* 45. 22. *Jonah* 2. 4. *Micah* 7. 7. This *Act* the soul may put forth without *Assurance.* Of the Difference between these two *Acts*, see Dr. *Ward*, *De Fide Justificante*, cap. 8. & 23. And (in English) Dr. *Bolton*, *Of the Nature of Faith*, pag. 60, 61. This latter *Act* is aptly expressed by Mr. *Cotton*, (a man of much Christian experience) on 1 *John* 5. 10. whose words I shall set down, because they are suited to the capacity and experience of weak Christians. [*There is* (saith he) *a believing on Christ, when the heart doth not yet rest on him, but roll it self on him; and that may be done while the heart is yet in motion; resting is a settledness of condition, but rolling is an unsettled tumbling about, sometimes one way, and sometimes another: yet such a Christian believes on*

Christ,

Christ, because he is rolling towards him, that so he may lie on him, Psal. 37.5. Commit thy way to the Lord; *according to the Original it is,* Roll thy way upon the Lord, *lean thy soul that way, which is done by rolling thy self towards him, that thou mayest rest upon him,* Pro. 16. 3. *a man may be said to lean on that whereon he is not settled.*] And indeed the Hebrews express the Act of Affiance by the word גלל which signifies to *roll,* Psal. 22. 8. Let the Reader only observe, that Mr. *Cotton* takes *resting* in a stricter sence, than we do in the former description, when he opposeth it to *rolling,* he understands thereby the *Affiance of Hope,* which *follows Assurance.* To come then to the Question, Dost thou freely accept of Jesus Christ for thy Saviour? Art thou heartily willing to strike hands with God in the Covenant of Grace? And though thou hast not a particular Assurance that Christ

Christ will save thee, Dost thou look towards him? Dost thou roll thy self upon him, though unbelieving thoughts return oft, and press hard upon thee? (As a man may roll a burden upon something, and it may return oft upon him again, before he can make it lie:) Thy condition is very hopeful. But here it will be objected, That there are some that for a time believe, and yet fall *away*, Luk. 8. 13. I confess this case is very difficult, yet I shall give the Objection a fair hearing before I answer it. Indeed I do believe that there is a real intrinsick difference between the first Act of *Justifying Faith*, and the *Faith* of a *Temporary*: Yet many times this difference is not discernable by the persons themselves which so believe; That you may understand what I mean; Suppose two men under the same affliction,

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as the *Iſraelites*, Pſal. 78. 31, *&c.* or both hearing the Word together, as *Luke* 8. 13. Theſe men may be ſo wrought upon, as that they may both make the ſame reſolution (as ſeems to themſelves) with alike ſerioufneſs, and without diſſimulation, freely taking Chriſt for their Saviour, or caſting themſelves upon him for Salvation, they may have the ſame apprehenſions concerning their own Acts themſelves, one of theſe may *fall*, the other *perſevere*. This is that which hath been long ſince taught: ſee *Dyke* on the *Deceitfulneſs of the Heart*, Chap. 20. where ſpeaking of the *Iſraelites*, Pſalm 78. 34. he ſays, *They ſpake as they thought, and meant to do.* See likewiſe more fully on this, Doctor *Jackſon* of *Faith*, Chap. 7. Paragr. 14. And it is generally acknowledged, That there are not only *groſs* Hypocrites, that de-

deceive others, but *close* Hypocrites that deceive themselves. But how comes it to pass, that one *stands*, and another *falls?* I answer, As it is in colours, two things may appear at first of the *same* colour, one *abides*, the other *fades*. Now the *Reason* of this is, there is an *addition* of some *ingredient*, which gives the one a more lasting tincture than the other; one is dyed in *grain*, the other hath but an *ordinary* dye. So to those *rational Motives* which are the *inducements* both to the one, and to the other to believe; there is in one, the *addition* of a *spiritual infusion*, which gives to one Man's Faith a true and abiding *tincture*; There is *a seed of God abiding in him*, 1 John 3. 9. You will say, If it be *thus*, How shall we ever come to any *Certainty* concerning our *own* Condition, if we may be deceived in the

the *Acts* of our *own* souls? If it be said, That we must know the truth of our Faith by the trial of it in standing out against temptations: This is something indeed. But what time must we take for the tryal of our Faith? When may we confirm the truth of it with a *probatum est?* When shall I know that the worst tryal is over? Some stood out in the time of Queen *Maries* persecution, which afterwards fell away in time of liberty and prosperity: *Joab* turned not after *Absalom*, but he turned after *Adonijah*. Though I turn not after one temptation, I may after another. Yea, a less temptation may overcome me after I have stood out against greater, *Adversus majora vigilantibus quædam incautis minuta subrepunt. Aug.* As *Lot* retained his integrity in *Sodom*, but miscarried when he was only with his own family,

family, *Gen.* 19. 33. And ſo we muſt conclude, There is no aſſurance to be had (without ſpecial revelation.) by this means while we are in this life, *Dicique beatus, ante obitum nemo*, &c. Having thus urged the Objection with all its ſtrength, I anſwer, There is yet another way for the tryal of our Faith, although many times in the firſt Act of Faith, (as *Streſo* obſerves) the ſoul is not ſo deliberate, it doth not ſtand to debate the matter long, or to form *Syllogiſmes*, but preſſed with the apprehenſion of its danger, lays hold on what is next to ſave it, and flees for refuge to the *hope that is ſet before it*: yet afterwards, when it comes more deliberately to recognize its former Act, (which he is ſuppoſed to have opportunity for, who is enquiring after the ſincerity of his Faith,) in this recognition or renewing the Act

Act of Faith, there is that which doth clearly difference it from a temporaries Faith. Therefore there are *three* things which I shall lay down, which may serve both to direct Christians in the exercise of their Faith, and the frequent renewing of their *hold* on Jesus Christ, and to try the sincerity of Faith, in the renewed Acts of it.

First, *Sit down, and count the cost of being the Disciples of Christ*, Luk. 14. 26. And see in the two fore-going verses the occasion of these words. Consider, That Christ will *rule* you if he *save* you; and that his Laws are not suited to your carnal interests, or corrupt lusts: We must take Christ, as he is *offered in the Gospel*, God hath condescended there, as far as he will; he cannot be brought to lower terms. Indeed in the first Act of Faith, usually the soul hath

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chief reſpect to *pardon*, as that which it is then moſt ſenſible of the want of: the ſoul therein *flees for refuge to Chriſt*, Heb. 6. 18. *Flees from the wrath to come*, Matth. 3. 7. But though pardoning grace be *Ratio motiva*; or the firſt inducement to bring us to Jeſus Chriſt, yet it muſt not be *ratio terminativa*, or that which muſt bound our deſires after him. Here now the Hypocrite fails, when he comes to ſee what it is to be a *Diſciple of Chriſt*, he repents of his repentance, and comes off with a *non putâram*: Chriſt had many followers, while they ſaw his miracles, and he was likely to be made an earthly King, but *they turned their backs on him*, when they underſtood the *Nature* of his *ſervice*, John 6. 16, 60, 66. Many under the laſh of afflictions, or the convictions of the Word, betake themſelves to Chriſt for *ſhel-*

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ter, but afterwards despise the *simplicity of the Gospel*, and the *strictness of holiness*; as one that in a storm takes shelter in a Cottage, where he would not be afterwards perswaded to dwell; or borrows a Coat, which after the shower is over he would scorn to wear. But *Paul*, when he came to make a recognition of his former act, *Phil.* 3. 7, 8. He *stands to his former choice* and *judgment*, *Those things* (saith he) *that were gain to me, I counted loss for Christ: Yea, doubtless, and I do count all things loss*, &c.

Secondly, *Bring your wills to a firm determinate resolution*, Psal. 119. 106. Acts 11. 23. When men have not brought their wills to this consistency, they are like fluid bodies, which, as we say, *Facilè continentur alienis terminis*, do yield to the form or figure of every vessel which they are put into. So

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theſe *double-minded men are unſtable as water*, like *Reuben*, Gen. 49. 4. faſhioning themſelves to every occurrence, which they meet with, receiving the impreſſion of every thing that is applied to them; when the Word comes with *power* upon their ſouls, they are quite born down with it, and are *all for Chriſt*; and when the *world* and *ſin* have an opportunity to ſet upon them, they *yield thereto*. This was (as *Maldonate* ſaith) the fault of the ſtony ground, they had not *Magnam & profundam voluntatem*: ſuch unſtable men invite temptations, whereas a firm reſolution *prevents them*; it *diſcourages the importunity of men*, Acts 21. 14. Yea, *It puts Satan to flight*, James 4. 7. *Vid.* Guil. Pariſienſ. *de Tentat. & Reſiſt. princ.*

Thirdly, *Commit the keeping of your ſouls to God in well-doing*, 1 Pet. 4. 18. None fitter than *Pe-*

ter to give this counsel, who had found by experience, how vain it is to make resolutions in our *own strength*, Matth. 26. 33, &c. We must not only *believe on Christ for Salvation*, but to be *kept by his power to Salvation*, 1 Pet. 1. 5. and God will not fail such as do thus *wait on him*, Isai. 40. 28. though others (that like young men are most confident of their own strength) may fall. Now then, Canst thou in sincerity go to God, and say? Lord, I know, that it is no easie matter to *deny my self*, to *cut off my right hand*, to *pluck out my right eye*, to *part with those sins which are most useful, most dear to me*; yet this *I must do*, if I will be the *Disciple of Christ*; yet having counted both the loss and the gain, which I shall thereby have, I *freely choose Christ for my portion*, let him do what he will with me, and bring me

me to Heaven which way ſeems good to him; I am reſolved to *cleave to him*, through the aſſiſtance of thy grace, *Who* (though I am not able to think any thing of my ſelf, yet) *art able to keep that good thing which I commit to thee*, 2 Tim. 1. 12. I know not what a ſoul ſhould do more in the act of Faith, if ten Heavens depended upon it.

I will very briefly add ſomething of the *temper* of a gracious ſoul, 1. It hath a *true love to Jeſus Chriſt*, 1 Cor. 16. 22. Joh. 14. 21. and this is ſooner diſcerned by the *inward inclination* and *affections of the heart*, than the *outward actions* of the life: Doſt thou breathe after more inward communion with him? Doſt thou lament inwardly after him? Though it may be thou haſt not ſuch a melting ſpirit as Mr. *Bradford*, who could ſit and weep at

Dinner, till the tears fell on his trencher, becauſe he could love God no more, yet is it a real trouble to thee, that thou canſt love him no more, nor do him better ſervice? Such a diſpoſition I am ſure cannot be without active endeavours: but theſe are *diſcoveries* of a *Divine Nature.*

2. A gracious ſoul is *careful to pleaſe God*, though it doth not know whether God love it, or no; This is a true filial diſpoſition, when a Child is willing to pleaſe its Father, and is ready to do any thing wherein it may be ſerviceable to him, though its Father will not (it may be) give it a good look, nor take any notice of it: if a ſoul find this diſpoſition in it ſelf, let it *ſtay it ſelf upon its God*, hold *thy ſelf by him*, he *bids thee*, *he will not caſt thee off.* Read *Iſai.* 50. 10.

3. A Child of God *hates ſin*, God

hates

hates it, Jer. 44. 4. and he that is *joyned* to the Lord is *one Spirit*, 1 Cor. 6. 16. And this is diſcovered in a general averſion *from all ſin*, hatred is againſt the whole *kind*: Some men *fear* ſin, but they do not *hate* it, many are afraid to be where ſome Creatures are, leſt they ſhould do them hurt; but if they are ſure that they are faſt chained, they are well enough; but where there is an *Antipathy*, ſuch cannot endure to be near thoſe Creatures, though they are ſure they cannot hurt them: So many are afraid of ſuch ſins as may *damn* them, or bring them to *ſhame*, or ſome other inconvenience in this *world*; but a godly man abhors his *ſecret corruptions*, which he knows the beſt that go to Heaven are troubled with, whilſt they are here, and which he knows will not hinder his worldly intereſt;

or as others aptly illustrate it, many are afraid to touch a *coal* when it is *hot*, for fear of *burning* them: but those who are more curious cannot endure to touch it when it is *cold*, lest it should *black* them: A wicked man is afraid to meddle with such sins as may *damn* him; a godly man is offended with such sins as may *defile* him. Thus, *Reader*, I have endeavoured to help thee in this great work; but if thou dost not set thy self with all diligence hereto, my labour is in vain: Yea, so it will be, unless the Lord set in by his *own Spirit*, to put forward the same. Though the Prophet had told *David* plainly, That the *Lord had put away his sin*, 2 *Sam.* 12. 13. that would not silence the clamours of a guilty conscience, nor quiet and calm his troubled spirit, but he must sue to God, *to restore to him the*

the joy of his salvation, Psal. 51. 12.

Some thoughts have offer'd themselves to me of inserting in this Edition some practical cases, which might be occasioned by what is supposed in the fore-going Treatise, and is now more generally received amongst Protestants than formerly, *viz.* That Assurance doth not always follow upon Faith, much less constitute it? Hereupon it might be justly questioned, How Christians that want Assurance can pray in Faith, come boldly to the throne of grace, approach with comfort to the Lords Table, rejoyce always in the Lord? *&c.* which seem to be duties incumbent on every Christian: But I have put off such thoughts at present, intending to reserve these, with many other things, for another Treatise, which I shall σὺν Θεῷ impart to the world, as I shall see occasion, and have oppor-

opportunity, and end this matter with the deſire of *Bernard, Med. cap.* 5. *Cum coram Deo in lachrymis te maceraveris, precor te, ut memor ſis mei*, when thou afflicteſt thy ſelf in tears before the Lord, I pray thee remember me, leſt when I have written and preached to others, I my ſelf ſhould be a caſt-away.

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